



Request for Proposals

Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year
through Municipal Led Initiatives and/or Partnerships
between Cities and Towns and Community-Based
Organizations (CBOs) and/or Local Education
Agencies (LEAs)

Optional Bidders Conference: 10:30 am, Wednesday, April 3, 2024
Application Due Date: 4:00 pm, Friday, May 3, 2024
Program Start Date: July 1, 2024
Program End Date: June 30, 2026

Call for Proposals

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) is requesting proposals for grants to foster new or expanded initiatives to promote learning beyond the formal school day and beyond the traditional 180-day school year. The ***Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year grant program*** is in support of Governor Daniel J. McKee's **Learn365RI initiative**, with the long-term goals of improving student learning outcomes and increasing **three key metrics**:

- 1) Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) mathematics and English Language Arts scores
- 2) School attendance rates
- 3) Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion rates.

Grants can begin as early as July 1, 2024 and run as late as June 30, 2026. Activities can take place during any time period within those dates. This funding is provided through the federal State Fiscal Recovery Fund. Funding will be awarded by RIDE to municipalities. Partnerships between municipalities and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and/or Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are strongly encouraged to ensure the effectiveness of proposed plans.

I. Purpose and Allowable Uses of Funds

Grants may be used to support high-quality out-of-school time programming with a specific focus on critical skill development, or to support new activities which take place outside of the typical school day and which are designed to increase one of the three learning metrics.

Potential ways that municipal leaders can engage in this effort include, but are not limited to:

- Provide skill-based out-of-school time learning programs. Programs may be operated by a municipality, or they may be provided in partnership with one or more LEAs and/or CBOs. Typically, these programs would take place afterschool, but before-school, weekend, vacation week, and/or summer learning programs – or some combination thereof – will be considered for funding.
- Invest in existing or new community learning programs, centers, and/or libraries that will help advance the goal of improving educational outcomes.
- Ensure seamless family supports to connect families from the school day to out-of-school time opportunities (e.g., support awareness campaigns, provide transportation).
- Regularly promote out-of-school-time learning activities using social media, constituent newsletters, and public forums.
- Implement a quality improvement system, offer professional learning opportunities, and/or provide coaching and technical assistance to improve the quality and effectiveness of out-of-school time programming.
- Create a Municipal Youth Commission to engage students in local leadership opportunities and develop critical thinking, communication skills and more.
- Develop other creative programs or activities outside of the school day that advance learning in ways that increase one or more of the three key learning metrics and are unique to the needs of the community.

Ideally, given the time-limited nature of these funds, the grants should be used to build capacity which can be sustained in the future. Applicants are encouraged to build upon the knowledge and learning they developed from the first round of *Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year* program.

Applications may propose completely new initiatives to benefit young people; may propose to improve or expand access to existing initiatives; or may propose a combination of both. In all cases, proposals must clearly articulate how proposed activities and services will expand opportunities beyond what would otherwise exist, in the absence of these funds.

II. Fostering New or Expanded Partnerships

The *Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year* grant program strongly encourages but does not require municipalities to partner with Local Education Agencies – including regular and/or regional school districts, as well as charter public schools – and with youth- and family-serving Community-Based Organizations (CBO). Given that all three of the outcome metrics of the grant program are education-related, municipalities are strongly encouraged to develop close working relationships with LEAs to achieve these metrics; any proposals that do not take this approach would be expected to justify the rationale. Likewise, given the relationships that many CBOs have built with youth and families and their expertise in providing engaging, experiential learning experiences, municipalities are encouraged to capitalize on this resource, where available.

Applications may propose to develop new partnerships, expand existing relationships, or do both. All partners who will receive funding through this grant should be explicitly identified in the proposal and in the budget.

Municipalities are expected to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) within the first three (3) months of the grant to clarify roles, responsibilities, and commitments to the partnership, including reimbursement procedures. Having access to individual student-level data is critical for partners, both to plan effectively and to track outcomes. Therefore, data sharing must be included in the MOU, or a separate Data Sharing Agreement must be established.

III. Grant Details

Grant Period: Grants will begin no sooner than July 1, 2024, and run no later than June 30, 2026.

Total Funding Available: Approximately \$3.8 million is available in total.

Grant Award Amounts – Standard and Expanded Grants: Two levels of funding will be awarded to municipalities:

- **Standard Grants** of \$40,000 will be awarded to municipalities for applications that demonstrate effective plans and use of funds at a baseline level of service. All proposals who meet a minimum quality standard will receive funding.
- **Expanded Grants** of up to \$400,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis to some municipalities. Applications who can demonstrate comprehensive plans and use of funds, that provide more intensive services to students and families, and/or that demonstrate a higher level of impact on the key learning metrics should consider an Expanded Grant. This is a competitive grant pool and not every application will be funded at the expanded level.

Municipalities are not guaranteed funding. Those that do receive funding may either be awarded a Standard Grant or an Expanded Grant, but not both.

Each municipality may only submit one grant application, but have the choice of applying for the following funding scenarios:

- A Standard Grant (\$40,000) only, or
- An Expanded Grant (up to \$400,000) and if not funded at the Expanded level, including information to be considered for the Standard Grant (\$40,000), or
- An Expanded Grant (up to \$400,000) only. Choose this option if you are only interested in operating an expanded program grant and are not interested in these funds at the standard level.

Municipalities who want to apply for an Expanded Grant and also be considered for a Standard Grant if they are not funded at the Expanded level, should submit an application which provides information about what they would propose at both the Standard Grant level of funding (\$40,000) and at the Expanded Grant level (more than \$40,000 but no more than \$400,000). Details on how to do that and about the required forms can be found below.

Municipalities who are only applying for either the Standard Grant or the Expanded Grant will only need to submit those corresponding documents (Standard or Expanded.)

Number of Grants: The number of grants awarded will depend upon the size and scope of the proposals received. RIDE is not obligated to award money under this RFP and reserves the right not to fund any proposals.

Matching Funds: Matching funds are not required for the *Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year* grant program.

Eligible Entities & Partnerships: Municipalities are the fiscal agent for the grant, though identified partners may receive funds through the municipality, as indicated in the application narrative and budget.

Application Deadline, Format, Submission, and Review

Bidders Conference: Wednesday, April 3rd at 10:30 a.m. An optional Bidders Conference will take place via Zoom to review the RFP and expectations associated with the grant funds.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86946435197>.

Application Deadline: Friday May 3, 2024, 4:00 p.m. Applications submitted late will not be considered for funding.

Application Format and Submission Process: Proposals must be sent electronically as email attachments to Learn365RI@ride.ri.gov by the application deadline. Links to documents in the cloud will not be accepted, nor will faxed, mailed, or hand-delivered submissions. Include all required forms, as listed below. Each document should be saved as a separate document in PDF or Excel format. Documents may be sent as attachments to a single email or as attachments to multiple emails. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all forms and materials are complete and sent on time.

All proposals must include the following forms:

1. Application Cover Form, with the signature of the Municipal Leader
2. Application Program Narrative Form
3. Signed Assurances Form

If applying for the Standard Grant only:

4. Standard Grant Budget Request Form
5. Standard Grant Budget Narrative Form

If you are applying for the Expanded Grant only:

6. Expanded Grant Budget Request Form
7. Expanded Grant Budget Narrative Form

If applying for the Expanded Grant or Standard Grant if Expanded is not funded:

- 4) Standard Grant Budget Request Form
- 5) Standard Grant Budget Narrative Form
- 6) Expanded Grant Budget Request Form
- 7) Expanded Grant Budget Narrative Form

Do not include any other materials, such as a letter of intent to apply, letters of support, job descriptions, etc. Grant reviewers are instructed not to review any items not listed above.

Application Review: All applications will receive an initial review for eligibility, compliance, and responsiveness. All eligible applications will then be evaluated on a rubric aligned to the program narrative, as detailed below. Decisions will be made based on the amount of funding

available, the amount of funding requested, and the quality of proposals received.

Applications may be:

- Selected for a Standard Grant
- Selected for a partially-funded Expanded Grant
- Selected for an Expanded Grant
- Not selected for immediate funding. Funds may be set aside at the standard grant level and technical assistance offered to the applicant with the opportunity for resubmission of the proposal.

Post-Review Process:

Once funding decisions have been made, applicants will be notified of their funding status. Those awarded partial funding will be asked to submit a revised budget and document outlining changes to the scope of work, based on the new funding amount. Awarded applicants may also be asked for additional information and/or revisions. Additional documents or materials may be requested by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

All awards receive a fiscal review by staff from RIDE's Office of Finance. Additional clarifications and/or revisions to the Budget Request and Budget Narrative forms may also be requested.

Once programmatic and fiscal issues have been resolved, applicants will be notified that their budgets have been approved. A Grant Award Notification (GAN) will be created. The GAN may include funding conditions (e.g., additional documentation that needs to be submitted before receiving funds; prior approval for certain types of expenditures, etc.) *No funds can be spent before a GAN has been issued by the RI Department of Education.*

IV. Program Narrative Contents

Below are the narrative sections that should be included in the proposal narrative, along with suggested page lengths and content that should be included in each.

For applicants applying for the Expanded Grant or Standard Grant if Expanded is not funded, complete both the Standard Application Narrative AND the Expanded Application Narrative. In most cases, the proposed Expanded activities and services would be supplemental to the proposed Standard ones, including more in-depth services within the same proposed initiatives and/or new initiatives in addition to the Standard ones. However, you may choose to propose an entirely different set of activities and services at each funding level.

If you are applying for Standard or Expanded Grants ONLY, complete the narrative section for Standard or Expanded Grants, not both.

All applicants must identify the target number of students engaged over the course of the program activities and the target number of hours students will be engaged. For example, if

you will engage 10 students for an hour each, the target number of hours would be 10 hours. If you are applying for the Expanded Grants or Standard Grant if Expanded is not funded, you need to identify these targets at each level of funding.

A. Partnerships (Standard Grant: ½-1 page. Expanded Grant: 1-1½ pages.)

Describe the nature of the partnerships you propose with this grant. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner in supporting this grant. Affirm the commitment of the leadership of each entity and their commitment to maintaining the partnership. Describe how the partners will coordinate with one another throughout the grant period and beyond. If particular municipal departments, such as Parks and Recreation or Libraries, will be involved in these partnerships, be sure to clarify that. If you anticipate identifying new partners at any point during the grant period, clarify how you would go about identifying them and be aware that RIDE must be notified of all new partners who may receive funding. Finally, please be sure to clarify if these are new partnerships or expansions of existing ones.

If applying for Expanded Grant funding, also describe how the proposed partnerships would be expanded and/or whether any additional partnerships would be harnessed to meet grant goals with the larger funding amount.

B. Student Needs and Outcome Measures (Standard Grant: ½-1 page. Expanded Grant: 1-1½ pages)

Provide a brief overview of the student needs that will be addressed by this grant. This must include data related to one or more of the three key learning metrics. Include the most recent available rate(s), as a **baseline rate**. This baseline rate may be for the district as a whole, for one or more schools, or for one or more other subsets of students (e.g., specific grades, specific subgroups of students).

1. **RICAS ELA and mathematics assessment scores** can be found on the RIDE Report Card Website, <https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov/>. Select the district or school and overall proficiency rates can be found. For rates by student group, gender, or grade, select the Assessments tab.
2. **Student chronic absenteeism rates** for 2022-23 can be found on the RIDE Report Card Website, <https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov/>. Select the district or school, select the Accountability tab, and then select the Student Absenteeism sub-tab. Historical attendance rates and chronic absenteeism rates with additional detail can be found at <https://datacenter.ride.ri.gov/Home/FileDetail?fileid=990>. Please note that the local school district may have data for the current school year so far, which may also be used as a baseline measure.
3. **Current FAFSA completion rates** by high school can be found on the Prepare-RI website at <https://www.prepare-ri.org/fafsa>. Historical numbers (but not rates) can be found on the Federal Student Aid website at <https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school>

For the chosen metric(s), set the **target rates** you intend to achieve for this metric for the 2024-25 school year and, if applicable, the 2025-26 school year. The target rates should mirror the baseline rate in terms of being district-wide, focused on specific schools, or focused on specific subgroups of students.

Target rates should be reasonable and applicable to the target number of students engaged and hours of engagement as listed at the top of the application.

You are encouraged to include other data that provides useful school or community context, such as results from a recent community needs assessment. In particular, SurveyWorks data has a number of indicators directly related to chronic absenteeism, including valuing of school, school engagement, and school belonging. SurveyWorks data can be found on the RIDE Report Card Website, <https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov/>.

C. Program description (Standard Grant: 4-5 pages. Expanded Grant: 5-7 pages.)

Provide an overall description of your proposed grant program. Clearly identify each initiative that you propose. For each initiative, as appropriate, please:

- Describe the purpose and what you expect to achieve through this initiative.
- Provide overall steps and timelines involved.
- Include the number of activities/events that would be offered.
- Indicate the number of students/families served.
- Note whether this initiative is intended to be available to all students/families or whether it will be targeted to particular groups of students/families and if so, how they will be identified for receiving this service.
- Explain which partners are involved in this initiative and how.
- Clarify how this initiative is designed to increase the key learning metric.
- If this is an out-of-school time learning program, be sure to include information on the location of services, hours of operation, and the overall operational structure. Also affirm your commitment to following [RI After-school Quality Standards](#). Finally, describe how safe, adequate, and age-appropriate transportation will be maintained.
- Be sure to make clear whether this is a new initiative or whether this is an expansion or improvement of an existing initiative. If it is the latter, make sure that it is clear to the reader what already exists and what would be added through this funding.
- If this is a continuation of previously funded *Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year* activities, explain what you have learned and how the continued funding will or will not change.
- Describe your proposed staffing structure, including the number and roles of all staff who will be funded through this grant, whether they are hired or contracted by the municipality or by a partner. Explain who will be responsible for each initiative described above and who will be responsible for overall management of the grant.
- Describe how ongoing, two-way communication will be maintained between the municipality and grant partners, and how two-way communication will be maintained

with students and their families. Describe how students and/or families will have an active voice in decisions that impact them.

D. Data Collection & Evaluation (Standard Grant ½-1 page. Expanded Grant 1-2 pages.)

In addition to the target rates identified in Section B above, and the target student numbers and hours of engagement, how you will evaluate success? Describe what data you will track through this grant.

What process or output measures will you track to ensure that you provide the level of service proposed? This may include such things as:

- types and numbers of activities provided,
- numbers of students served at different levels of service,
- numbers of forums or events held,
- numbers of family members served,
- numbers and types of communications published,
- number of professional development activities offered, numbers participating, and/or evaluation results,
- number of Municipal Youth Commission meetings held and results,
- number of additional bus routes run, etc.

Speak to how you will ensure that all monthly data and financial reporting will be submitted in a timely manner, how you will coordinate data and financial collection across partner sites, and identify who will be the primary point(s) of contact for participant data collection and financial reporting.

V. Forms

1. Application Cover – with required signature

Complete all sections of the cover page and have the document signed by the **City or Town Mayor, Town Administrator, or Town Manager**. Please note that this form must be signed by the above individuals and may not be signed by a designee. The Application Cover page should be scanned and saved as a PDF document.

2. Application Program Narrative Form

Use the form provided. See Section VI above for more information.

3. Signed Assurances Form

Use the form provided.

4. Budget Request Form(s) (Standard, Expanded, or Both)

All Department of Education grants are reimbursable grants. No funds are paid up-front. Municipalities may only request reimbursement after funds have been expended. Partners on

the grant must invoice the municipality. The municipality may only request reimbursement from RIDE once they have paid the provider. No funds for this grant may be spent until the budget is approved.

Applicants are required to complete at least one Grant Budget Request Form (Standard, Expanded, or both) which includes expenses over the course of the grant, which can include expenses as early as July 2024 (FY25) and run through June 30, 2026 (FY26).

Refer to the Budget Guidance Document when building your budget to ensure that the budget you propose meets the necessary, reasonable and allowable threshold, and that expenses are captured in the correct category for this grant.

All grant awards and reimbursements will be made to the municipality. When building the budget keep in mind that the “grantee” is the municipality and any partner expenses would be captured in contractual services. As a reimbursable grant, partners would invoice the municipality for their expenses, the municipality would pay the partner, and then the municipality will submit a reimbursement request to RIDE.

Enter the name of the municipality in the space indicated on the first tab. Please note that different budget categories are provided on different tabs of the budget spreadsheet.

- **51000 & 52000 Employee Compensation and Employee Benefits** is for employees hired by the municipality, including stipended positions, but not for consultants or contractors.
- **53000 Professional & Technical Services** is for temporary contracted services, evaluations & testing, legal, audit, food for travel to conferences, training & professional development services.
- **54000 Property Services** is for cleaning, repairs and maintenance, utilities, rentals, telephone, internet & wireless.
- **55000 Other Services** is for services such as transportation, insurance, advertising, printing, tuition, travel & hotel expenses related to attendance at trainings.
- **Category 56000 Supplies & Materials** is for consumables and general supplies, including program supplies or office supplies, books, and maintenance supplies.
- **Category 57000 Property & Equipment** is for furniture, technology – hardware & software – and other equipment.
- **Category 58000 Miscellaneous** is for things that do not fall under any of the above categories, such as dues for professional organizations.
- **Category 60000 Indirect** – You may include indirect costs at or below the amount of your municipality’s federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. If you have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, you will be required to share documentation with RIDE in order to use the Indirect category. The indirect fee should be calculated not on the full amount of your grant, but as a percentage of eligible expenditures. Eligible expenditures are all items in categories 51000, 52000, 56000, and 58000. The first

\$25,000 of each contract in categories 53000, 54000, and 55000 is also eligible. If the municipality does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, please do not include indirect costs in the budget.

The line-item descriptions must include sufficient detail (e.g., number of hours of work per week, at what rate of pay, and for how many weeks per year; how many items at what cost per item; etc.) for reviewers to understand what is being purchased. **Do not include** any other sources of funding in the Budget Request Form, even if you plan to braid this grant with other funds.

Grants must follow the [Uniform Guidance](#), the federal education fiscal regulations. All expenditures must be allowable, necessary, reasonable, and allocable. Proper fiscal documentation of all expenses must be maintained throughout the grant period. ***Please note that no new fees may be charged to students or families in order to participate in any programs or activities that are funded through this grant.***

The following are not allowable budget items:

- Entertainment
- Food for staff/volunteers
- Gift cards
- Construction or facility purchase or repair
- Religious worship, instruction, or proselytization
- Endowments
- Materials or programs “designed to promote or encourage sexual activity”
- Distributing legally obscene materials
- Sexuality- or HIV-education that is not age appropriate and that does not include the health benefits of abstinence
- Distributing contraceptives
- Alcoholic beverages
- Lobbying

The Budget Request form should be saved in PDF or Excel format. Save the entire workbook, not just a single worksheet.

Applicants applying for an Expanded Grant or Standard Grant if Expanded is not funded, must complete both a Standard Grant Budget Request Form *and* an Expanded Grant Budget Request Form. The structure and expectations of the forms are the same. Each must be a standalone document, outlining budget requests at the two different funding amounts.

Applicants who are applying for a Standard or Expanded Only grant need to only submit one budget form, Standard or Expanded.

5. Budget Narrative Form(s) (Standard and Expanded)

The Budget Narrative Form provides a narrative overview of the budget request. The Budget Narrative Form must align with, and provide an explanation of, the content in the Budget Request Form. The budget narrative should describe how the items within the budget support the goals and activities of the project.

If you intend to braid funds provided through this grant with funds from other sources, please clarify that here. You do not need to provide details on everything that will be paid for by other sources. A high-level overview that helps grant reviewers understand how this grant would supplement and expand existing initiatives is sufficient.

Applicants applying for an Expanded Grant or Standard Grant if not funded for Expanded, must complete both a Standard Grant Budget Narrative Form *and* an Expanded Grant Budget Narrative Form. Each Budget Narrative Form should align to the corresponding Budget Request Form, providing context and clarification of the proposed expenses.

Applicants who are applying for a Standard or Expanded Only grant need to only submit one narrative, Standard or Expanded.

VI. Grant Expectations

Specific expectations and requirements of the grant are still in development. In general, awarded grantees will be expected to:

- Submit monthly data and financial progress reports,
- Submit quarterly program narrative updates,
- Participate in professional development offerings,
- Participate in statewide evaluation efforts,
- Develop Memoranda of Understanding with all partners,
- Develop a Data Sharing Agreement between the CBO and the LEA, either as part of the MOU or as a stand-alone document (if applicable)